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3885-Delta Council

Agricultural Water Management Council • 6133 Freeport Boulevard, 2nd Floor • Sacramento, CA 95822-3534

September 1, 2010

Phil Isenberg, Chairman
Delta Stewardship Council
650 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Isenberg:

I am requesting your support for funding assistance for the Agricultural Water Management Council.

The Agricultural Water Management Council (AWMC) is a non-profit organization established in 1996 dedicated to bringing together all interested parties in agricultural water management with the goal of achieving greater water management efficiency. AWMC was authorized under the provisions of the Agricultural Water Suppliers Efficient Water Management Practices Act of 1990 (AB 3616).

AWMC is specifically identified in SBX7-7, part of the 2009 comprehensive package of water bills, as an organization that the Department of Water Resources is directed to work with on statewide water management planning activities. It has a long history working with agricultural water suppliers to develop water management plans and is an outgrowth of 1990's AB 3616.

Much of the agricultural water management planning guidance in SBX7-7 is derived from the process developed by AWMC over the years. The benefit to DWR and the water user community is the credibility it holds in the water user community and its positive working relationship with agricultural water suppliers. AWMC is the co-chair of the SBX7-7 Agricultural Stakeholder Committee, assisting in the development of an acceptable definition for agricultural water measurement, defining water use efficiency in agriculture and helping districts prepare SBX7-7 compliant water management plans. It is anticipated that AWMC will also be able to provide assistance to DWR in reviewing the large number of water management plans that will eventually be submitted by agricultural water suppliers under SBX7-7.

AWMC's role in agricultural water management planning:

- AWMC performs services that were identified in its governing Memorandum of Understanding, and its continued operation is dependent on partnership support from State and federal sources that directly benefit from its activities.
- AWMC is the only organized effort currently in place to help achieve the agricultural conservation goals set forth in the delta reform package.
- AWMC was identified as a partner in SBX7-7, part of the 2009 legislative package that, among other things, creates specific requirements for agricultural water management plans.
- SBX7-7 uses a framework developed by the Council as the basis of its water management plan requirements. (Part 2.8, Chapter 3, Article 2)
- SBX7-7 specifically directs DWR to work in consultation with AWMC to develop a methodology for quantifying the efficiency of agricultural water use. (Chapter 8, 10608.64)
- AWMC received initial support in 2001 through a Cooperative Agreement between itself, DWR and the Bureau of Reclamation. This successful partnership enabled the Council to initiate a successful voluntary water management planning process throughout California. Those funds were exhausted in 2006.
- Special projects to develop water management planning tools have been funded over time through contracts with the Department of Water Resources, the Bureau of Reclamation and from member dues.
- AWMC receives funding through annual dues assessments, however they fall short of the amount necessary to fully fund its ongoing administrative activities.
- No single source currently funds all of AWMC's activities.

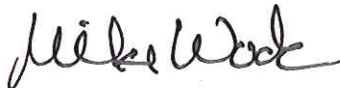
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We are requesting:

- That DWR reinstate Agreement No. 4600008145 with the Agricultural Water Management Council currently under a "stop work" order so that work may resume on outreach and education efforts AWMC is conducting with agricultural water suppliers on SBX7-7.
- That DWR be encouraged to continue supporting low-cost tools through AWMC for agricultural water suppliers between 10,000 and 25,000 acres to assist in their efforts to develop water management plans under the provisions of SBX7-7. Supporting the ongoing activities of AWMC helps meet the needs of these small water suppliers and facilitates their inclusion in state water planning activities.
- Interim funding in the amount of \$50,000 from the Delta Stewardship Council to support AWMC's water management planning efforts that will help achieve the agricultural water conservation goals in the delta reform package.
- Ongoing financial support for AWMC in the amount of \$100,000 per year in the Delta Plan to ensure continuation of outreach and water management planning activities under SBX7-7.

Without immediate action, the Agricultural Water Management Council is at risk of ceasing operations by the end of 2010. Essential work on behalf of agricultural water suppliers is on the horizon and immediate action is necessary for AWMC to fulfill the tasks designated for it in SBX7-7.

Sincerely,



Mike Wade
Executive Director

cc: Randy Fiorini
Gloria D. Gray
Patrick Johnston
Felicia Marcus
Hank Nordhoff
Don Nottoli
Joe Grindstaff